



Fall 2006
Volume 15, Issue 2

CLOUTreach

The Quarterly Newsletter for Christian Lesbians OUT
proudly progressive, actively anti-racist, creatively spiritual, milagro bound

ATLANTA July 12-15, 2007

CROSSING BORDERS, CONFRONTING RACISM; CLAIMING GRACE: Generations, Geographies, Genders

CLOUT is excited to be presenting a national gathering next summer featuring keynote preacher **Bishop Yvette Flunder**, senior pastor of City of Refuge United Church of Christ in San Francisco. **Bishop Flunder** is also founder of "The Fellowship" a national ministry of "radical inclusivity." Below are a few of her comments at their fantastic national conference June 29-July 1, 2006 in Phoenix, which CLOUT National Coordinator, **Rev. Jan Griesinger** was privileged to attend.

Stop explaining yourselves. The mainstream will learn from the radical inclusivity of the margins. Look for those who are most marginalized and serve them on purpose. With respect to a common cup at communion, let people with HIV drink first, as others are a greater danger to them. Name who is "everyone" who is welcome; write it in your program. If you make change gradually you just empower the people who don't want to change. You've got to make people grow and expect that they'll get angry. As long as we placate, the deep pockets will hold hostage your ministry.

Don't Miss It!

CLOUT 2007 National Conference in Atlanta, Georgia

July 12-15, 2007
Mark your calendars now!

Our 2007 Theme:
**CROSSING BORDERS,
CONFRONTING RACISM,
CLAIMING GRACE:
Generations,
Geographies, Genders**



Picture: Dr. Mary Hunt and Bishop Evette Flunder speaking at the CLOUT 2005 Gathering.

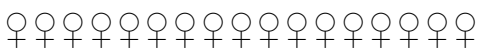
Many other well known speakers, panelists, workshop and worship leaders will be present. Watch the next issue of *CLOUTreach*, the CLOUT newsletter, and the being-redesigned CLOUT website (<http://www.cloutsisters.org>) for names. Expect lots of story-telling as speakers and participants are asked to share strategies that work for them as they cross borders.

The Atlanta gathering (in an air-conditioned location) will, for the first time, welcome children and feature special programming for them,

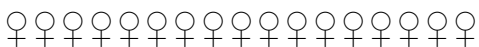
including lesbian parenting workshops. The event will begin Thursday evening July 12 and conclude Sunday noon, July 15. Save the dates!

NEWS AND NOTES from and for Christian lesbians around the world

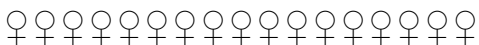
Institute for Welcoming Resources provides a list of LGBT friendly and welcoming churches across the US. Further information from IWR is available on the world-wide-web at www.WelcomingResources.org. The file is rather large, so it may take a while to open it. That's good news—the more churches, the better!



A **Christian lesbian support group** in Edinburgh, Scotland meets the second Wednesday of each month. Contact them at <http://www.notasurprisetogod@yahoo.com> or call 0131-443-0254.



A small non-denominational LGBT congregation, Ecclesia of Greater Lansing, in Lansing, Michigan is **looking for a part-time pastor**. Contact Elizabeth Glew at: gleweliz@comcast.net.



OUT in Scripture:

A new resource from the Human Rights Campaign places scholars' comments about the Bible alongside the real life experiences and concerns of lgbt people of faith and our allies. Discover a fresh approach to Scripture. Be honest, question and go deeper.

Out In Scripture is especially helpful for preachers preparing sermons based on the Revised Common Lectionary (a selection of Bible readings for each Sunday). Find it at <http://www.hrc.org/scripture/>.

CLOUT Co-chair, **Dr. Judith Hoch Wray** serves on the editorial advisory board for this project.

UNITED METHODIST BISHOP ADVOCATES FOR INCLUSION

Bishop Minerva Carca-Flo, who leads the United Methodist Church's Desert Southwest Annual (regional) Conference, spoke to a consultation of Clergywomen of Color Scholars Aug. 13 about the boundaries that must be transcended in order for all women to follow the path of Christ. The consultation was organized to celebrate the United Methodist Church's Women of Color Scholars Program as well as identify challenges ahead.

The bishop applauded the growing number of women of color who have earned advanced degrees in the church, but she noted that the lack of Hispanic/Latina, Native American and Pacific Islander women must be addressed. The Women of Color Scholars Program must find ways to encourage and accompany all women of color who have the gifts for intellectual pursuit and teaching, Carca-Flo said.

In addition to recruiting people from other ethnic groups, she urged the care and support of women of color who are ostracized because they are lesbian, bisexual or transgender. Carca-Flo said she has often been told to cease advocating for their inclusion, but she tells her critics that "if another suffers then it is my suffering; it is our suffering. And we will never be whole and well until all God's children are accepted not as we would like them to be, but as God made them."



JOIN THE FUN TODAY!
CLOUT SISTERS at play

The Wolf Shall Live with the Lamb: A Reflection

excerpts from article by Rev. Mari Castellanos
Minister for the Justice and Peace Action Network
of the Justice and Witness Ministries
of the United Church of Christ

Few biblical images are dearer to us than the prophetic representation of the fullness of the Reign of God, where the wolf dwells with the lamb, and the lion, the calf, the leopard and the kid lie down together. The unlikely image even includes children playing and leading the fiercest beasts.

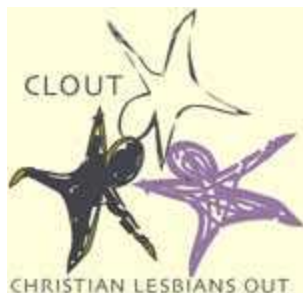
What would it take for the wolf and the lamb to dwell together? For one thing it would require good pastures for the sheep and an alternative source of protein for the wolf. Contrary to Aesop and all other popular misconceptions, wolves are not intrinsically aggressive, but a hungry wolf does not make a good neighbor. Perhaps we ought to send this rather simplistic observation to the Congress.

We seem very far away from the Messianic vision. Hunger and anger have made terrible partnerships. So have power and greed. We live with the disparities and violence in our country and in our world. As a people, a nation, a church, we, too—not only the Congress—need to respond to [budgets that ignore this vision]. May we be savvy enough to keep in mind the hungry wolves and the hungry lambs. May we be bold enough to demand the equality that leads to peace.

For more information contact: castellm@ucc.org.

NOTICE:

CLOUT T-shirts are available. They are purple with white lettering that says Christian Lesbians OUT with our logo. The cost is \$25 plus \$5 for shipping/handling. You will receive your T-Shirt in a priority mail envelope. If you make a contribution to CLOUT of \$125 or more you will automatically receive a free T shirt.



NEWS AND NOTES

from and for Christian lesbians around the world

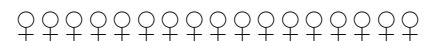
(continued from page 2)

CREATING CHANGE – The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, the oldest National LGBT rights organization holds its annual conference for grass roots activists in Kansas City, November 8-12, 2006. **CLOUT will be there** to present our views.

Over 2,000 social change activists from across the country will be there. Keynote speakers, panels, workshops, and day-long intensive educational events are always exciting. For details contact them at www.thetaskforce.org or call 202-393-5177.



CLOUT member Frodo Okulam from Portland, OR, just graduated from San Francisco Theological Institute with her Doctor of Ministry degree. Her dissertation project title was: "Earthsong: SisterSpirit's Contribution to the Spirituality of the Eco-Justice Movement." SisterSpirit is a women's spirituality group that just celebrated their 20th anniversary and was featured in local newspaper articles.



CLOUT EMAIL LIST

CLOUT is starting an email list. If you would like to receive occasional updates about CLOUT activities, please send us your email to be sure you are added to the list.

Send your email address to:
clout@seorf.ohiou.edu

HERSTORY PROJECT



The CLOUT Council

L to R: Judith Hoch Wray, Kim O'Reilly, Dawn Sorensen, Nadean Bishop, Lavon Stalling, Roberta Robles, Jan Griesinger

CLOUT Council members Nadean Bishop and Dawn Sorenson have applied for a \$5,500 grant to videotape the life stories of Christian lesbians over 65, focusing on their theological perspectives. If the Herstory Project is funded, we will plan to do ten 2-hour interviews in 2007 (with additional videotaping in future years), editing the tapes to be included in presentations in churches and on cable television. In addition, we will transcribe the most fascinating stories for inclusion in an archive. We propose to gather and preserve stories from a wide variety of socio-economic classes, ethnic traditions, geographic regions, and life experiences. Our intention is not to limit ourselves to those who are members of CLOUT but to take recommendations from our membership about other lesbians who have contributed to their faith traditions.

If you would like to be interviewed would like to nominate some-one to be videotaped, please send their contact information and a few reasons why they would be good subjects to Nadean Bishop at PalBish@msn.com before the end 2006.

The herstories collected in this project can help educate people of all ages about the lives of Christian lesbians during a very different time from the present era. For many of these women, "coming out" was not a viable option because doing so would have risked their jobs, families, homes, health and sometimes their very lives. These herstories will serve to remind us all of the relative freedom we now enjoy thanks to these women who were strong enough to live their lives and love whomever they wanted.

SUMMARY OF CLOUT COUNCIL RETREAT MINUTES

Atlanta: September 14-17, 2006

Judith Hoch Wray (Co-chair), Jan Griesinger (National Coordinator), Roberta Robles, and Nadean Bishop (Recorder) gathered September 15-17, 2006 in Atlanta. Council members Lavon Stallings (Co-chair), Dawn Sorensen, and Kim O'Reilly were unable to travel to Atlanta for personal or health reasons. Major business included planning the **CLOUT Conference, to be held in Atlanta, July 12-15, 2007**. The Conference theme will be: **"Crossing Borders, Confronting Racism, Claiming Grace: Generations, Geographies, Genders."**

Dialogue groups, fishbowl discussions, and story-telling will accompany panels and worship services. Parallel programming for children will make the conference family-friendly. Local Atlanta women worked with us on Saturday to refine the program and recommended contacts in Atlanta, supplementing the list of local LGBT-friendly congregations provided earlier by **Jodie Talley**. We hope to hire an Atlanta coordinator for the Conference to do PR and on-site arrangements.

Jan Griesinger announced that she will be leaving her position as National Coordinator after the conference because of her increasing duties for Old Lesbians Organizing for Change (OLOC). Judith, Nadean and Roberta expressed heartfelt thanks for her long service. The search process for her successor will begin early in 2007. The 2007 budget was approved.

Grants requests have been submitted to the Carpenter Foundation for assistance with the Atlanta conference, Council retreats, and for the "Herstory Project." The website is being updated by **Chris Paige** and will include recent newsletters, links to sister organizations, and a link to a listing of LGBT-friendly congregations. A newsletter and a fundraising letter will be sent out in the next 3 months.

Beyond Good Intentions: An Anti-Racism Workshop for White Allies in Faith-based Organizations

December 4-7, 2006 at InterPlayce in Oakland, California

Time and again, we hear white people say: “believe passionately in racial justice, but I don’t know how to translate that belief into action that makes a real difference.” Likewise, the failure of white-led organizations to boldly and consistently address racism often stems not from a lack of desire, but from a lack of analysis, skill, and accountability.

With affirmative action, racial profiling, homeland security, and the aftermath of hurricane Katrina at the center of public debate, multiracial coalitions within and across faith communities can make a crucial contribution to the struggle for racial equality and a just society. If white people of faith are to become anti-racist allies and agents of change, we need to move beyond good intentions and “do our own work.”

This four-day workshop provides a context for white people to educate ourselves about white racism and white privilege, hold each other accountable, and demonstrate good faith as we seek to build genuine and lasting alliances with people of color. *Beyond Good Intentions* is intended to supplement, not substitute for, contexts where people of diverse races strategize and work together to dismantle racism.

Through input from the workshop leaders, assigned readings, videos, group discussion, and structured exercises, *Beyond Good Intentions* will help white leaders transform their values into action by:

- sharing concrete tools that foster self-awareness and analysis of white privilege and institutional racism
- cultivating practices of truth-telling and prophetic witness that allow white people to speak out against racism
- breaking down counter-productive patterns of shame and guilt which short-circuit white people’s capacity to serve as effective allies in anti-racist work
- deepening the spiritual foundations which undergird the commitment to courageous, visionary testimony
- developing strategies for creating and sustaining institutional change
- helping participants gain the skills and strength they need to work for structural change in their home communities.

In addition to employing analysis of critical race theory and anti-racism/anti-oppression pedagogy, *Beyond Good Intentions* will incorporate theological and biblical reflections and spiritual practice from Christian and Jewish traditions. The event is gender inclusive.

Leaders: Julia Watts Belser and Melanie Morrison; **Time:** Monday – Thursday, 9:30 am to 5:30 pm
Location: InterPlayce in Oakland, California; **Cost:** \$350 (\$100 deposit; \$200 balance due) Registration may be paid in installments extending past the time of the workshop.

You may register online with a credit card or download a registration form at The Leaven Center web site: www.leaven.org/registration.htm. For more information about *Beyond Good Intentions*, call 989-855-2606 or email leavencenter@leaven.org. *This workshop is made possible by a grant from the United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries.*

Julia Watts Belser is an author, activist, and anti-oppression educator studying to be a rabbi at the Academy for Jewish Religion in Los Angeles and completing doctoral study in the Joint Program in Jewish Studies at the Graduate Theological Union and University of California in Berkeley.

Melanie Morrison is Director of The Leaven Center, an ordained United Church of Christ minister, anti-oppression educator, and author of three books including *The Grace of Coming Home: Sexuality, Spirituality, and the Struggle for Justice*. For the past 12 years, she has co-facilitated Doing Our Own Work, an anti-racism seminar for white people. She is an active member of CLOUT.

InterPlayce is at the corner of 23rd and Telegraph, just a few blocks from the **19th Street Bart Station**, and one block north of West Grand Avenue. The address is 2273 Telegraph Avenue, Oakland, CA 94612.

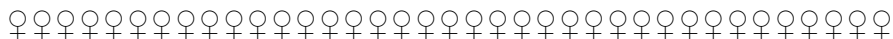


"BLOODY KNUCKLES" WITNESS AT CLERGYWOMEN'S CONSULTATION

(Chicago, Illinois) United Methodist clergywomen from around the world were recently in Chicago to celebrate 50 years of full clergy rights for women at the 2006 International United Methodist Clergywomen's Consultation. Following the spirited sermon of retired Bishop Judith Craig on Monday, those in the audience were painfully aware of the continued knocking of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons on the closed doors of the church. Bishop Craig preached on Luke 18:1-8, a story about a widow who kept knocking on a judge's door until justice was given her. Bishop Craig likened the early pioneers in the women's ordination movement to the widow, as they kept knocking on the doors of the church until women were given full ordination rights in 1956. She noted that persons sometimes knock until their knuckles are bloody to finally bring about change.

As consultation participants gathered for [Tuesday] morning's session, they passed by clergywomen knocking on doors. Available for signing was a "Bloody Knuckle Petition" which asked signers to covenant to take the following actions:

- * Educate ourselves and our congregations about the issues affecting LGBT persons.
- * Pray communally and privately for LGBT people who are wounded and excluded by the church's sin of homophobia.
- * Offer tangible and vocal support (like cookies and Kleenex) to your LGBT friends and family.
- * Help to elect General Conference delegates who will do all in their power to ensure the full inclusion of LGBT persons in church and society.
- * Communicate with General Conference delegates about the critical importance of electing fair-minded, faithful Judicial council members.
- * Become familiar with and involved in justice ministries that are working for the full inclusion of LGBT persons (e.g. Reconciling Ministries Network—<http://www.rmnetwork.org> and Methodist Federation for Social Action—<http://www.mfsaweb.org>. See photos at www.rmnetwork.org.)



Pictures in this issue of CLOUTreach by Nadean Bishop.

Interim newsletter editor, Judith Hoch Wray.

♀♀♀♀♀

**Celebrate yourself!!
Come to the 2007
CLOUT National
Gathering in Atlanta,
July 12-15, 2007.**



Judith Hoch Wray and Atlanta friend of CLOUT, Clarice Martin, taking a break at CLOUT Council planning meeting in Atlanta in September, 2006.

The Center for Lesbian/Gay Studies in Religion and Ministry at Pacific School of Religion and the Pilgrim Press announce the publication of

Qu(e)rying Evangelism: Growing a Community from the Outside In

by Cheri DiNovo

When the members of her rapidly shrinking congregation in a poor, inner city Toronto neighborhood decide to evangelize among the marginalized and “queer” at their gate, church members are radically changed. The book answers the following questions:

- ♀ How do we understand evangelism biblically and in a completely new way?
- ♀ How does one be a queer theologian in a traditional pastorate?
- ♀ How does one grow a congregation with real differences of opinion?
- ♀ How does the presence of the transgendered/transsexual challenge both theology and praxis of a mainline denomination?

Cheri DiNovo is senior minister at Emmanuel Howard United Church in Toronto, Ontario and hosts the “Radical Reverend Show,” a weekly radio show in Toronto.



Because Christian institutions have historically devalued the gifts and stifled the voices of lesbian women, we hold our identity as “Christian” and “Lesbian” in creative tension. We respect the right of every woman to define for herself what it means to be both Christian and lesbian. Our primary purpose is to claim our spiritual and sexual wholeness, to proclaim the goodness of our lives, our ministries and our relationships, and to empower ourselves and each other to challenge the churches to which we belong.

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WHO is CLOUT?

CLOUT (Christian Lesbians OUT) is a sisterhood of female-identified, same-gender loving mujeristas, womanists, and feminists from all Christian backgrounds. Anchored by the life and teachings of Jesus, we challenge abuses of power based on race, class, gender and age.

CLOUT’s mission is to:

- Provide hope and nurture to lesbians
- Challenge churches and other religious organizations that are oppressive to lesbians
- Build coalitions with other justice-seeking organizations
- Support education and conversation about sexuality and relationships.

CLOUT Leadership

CLOUT National Office: Rev. Jan Griesinger, National Coordinator

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**I/WE PLEDGE THE FOLLOWING TO CELEBRATE THE
MIRACLE OF BEING CHRISTIAN, LESBIAN & OUT:**

___ \$250 ___ \$100 ___ \$75 ___ \$40 OTHER \$ ___
___ \$25 (for students / low income)

___ MONTHLY ___ QUARTERLY ___

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NOW, BUT PLEASE KEEP ME ON THE LIST

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